

State Department strips Scott Ritter's passport at New York airport

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On June 3, the State Department reportedly revoked the passport of US citizen Scott Ritter as he attempted to fly via Istanbul to St. Petersburg, Russia to attend an economic forum. Ritter was pulled off a Turkish Airlines flight from John F. Kennedy Airport in New York City.

Ritter is a former US Marine officer and United Nations weapons inspector who has become a prominent opponent of the US/NATO war against Russia. Ritter also has political connections with the Russian government and its allies.

The decision by the State Department to confiscate Ritter's passport is a flagrant violation of American law. US citizens possess a constitutional right to travel outside the country regardless of their political beliefs, pursuant to a 1964 decision *Aptheker v. Secretary of State*.

In that case, issued at a much earlier phase in the degeneration of American democracy, the Supreme Court ruled that the State Department cannot force an individual to change their political beliefs in order to travel abroad.

It stated:

Since freedom of association is itself guaranteed in the First Amendment, restrictions imposed upon the right to travel cannot be dismissed by asserting that the right to travel could be fully exercised if the individual would first yield up his membership in a given association.

In an interview with Russian state media RT, Ritter called the passport revocation “a deliberate ambush”

and said that he was “100 percent certain” he was targeted because of his political views.

“I am thinking they've freaked out,” he said of US officials. “They saw ‘St. Petersburg International Economic Forum.’ They saw ‘Moscow International Security Conference.’ And they've said: ‘Shut this thing down.’ And that's what they did.”

Ritter said he had informed US authorities before his trip that he planned to travel to Russia to attend a political event, and that authorities had allowed him to board the flight.

The State Department has so far refused to comment, telling Russia's TASS agency, “We cannot comment on the status of the passport of a private U.S. citizen.”



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